

## **D-Day in the *Chicago Daily Tribune***

Daniel D. Borup  
University Laboratory High School, Urbana  
Teacher: Steve Rayburn

On June 6, 1944, American and British troops stormed beaches and parachuted into France in one of the largest invasions ever. It was one of the most influential events in American, as well as European, history. The attack was the start of a long American campaign in Europe that would eventually lead to an Allied victory over Hitler and the Nazis. An analysis of the *Tribune* revealed two major parts to its influence in Illinois.

One of the first articles published by the *Tribune*, titled “D’Day Reward of Four Years’ Faith and Toil” and written on June 6, showed some of the events leading up to the attack. According to the article, in the years preceding this invasion, Allied armies (American, British, and Canadian) learned to cooperate in a series of other battles. Meanwhile, in the background, Allied strategists planned the attacks in secrecy. Many of these attacks were surprise raids that put the Germans on the defensive.

Most of the articles published on June 6 were written by the Associated Press, including one mentioned above. Because the *Tribune* was a morning paper, there was little time for *Tribune* writers to express their opinions. Because it was such surprising news, the June 6 paper may have most influenced Illinoisans. However, many people may not have been able to get a copy. The next papers may have been just as important, and they contained more opinionated columns.

The AP’s coverage was very basic, informative, and seemed to be largely objective. The purpose of its articles was to inform people of what was going on. The main feature on June 6 was titled “Fierce Battle Rages in Normadie, Berlin Says.” The

article contained information on what kind of battles were going on, who was fighting, and where the battles were going on. Because the AP coverage was mainly informative and objective, it was not very influential with the citizens of Illinois.

Most opinions came later in the editorial columns. The opinion and editorial columns were written in a very patriotic manner, but were opposed to Franklin Delano Roosevelt's presidency as evidenced in coverage as well as several subtleties. The headlines were covered by current war news, which was mainly written by the AP. However, the editorial columns had many opinions that both debated and justified the war and other events of the time. Although D-Day was a major issue, some articles discussed other topics such as the current president and the upcoming Republican National Convention in Chicago.

Most of the opinions expressed about D-Day were pro-war. After the attacks on Pearl Harbor, the debates about the war subsided and opinion became more unified. There were, however, still people who disliked the administration and other aspects of the government. And, as always, there were extremists who were always pro- or anti-war.

One of the most interesting articles in the editorial section was an article titled "The Onward March of Nationalism." Nationalism is a state of mind, which values the health of the country above everything else. The point of the article was to show that nationalism could help a Republican candidate defeat F.D.R in the next presidential election. Most of the article seemed to be slanted against F.D.R.'s presidency. One quotation from that article read "[Mr. Roosevelt] listed himself as unwilling to surrender any sovereignty, a stand which, of course, is subject to the usual discount of any Rooseveltian campaign promises." This lengthy sentence is critical of Roosevelt.

The articles and editorials are filled with many opinions about F.D.R. One of the main things that was interesting about the articles was the description of the war as either Roosevelt's or Eisenhower's. Many remarks were made about Eisenhower's troops or battles. Comments may have been phrased that way due to dislike of F.D.R. Because they mentioned Eisenhower, not Roosevelt, they may have made people believe that Eisenhower deserved the credit and lowered the image of the president.

In many of the articles, interesting language is used to describe F.D.R. In one article, titled "Allied Invasion up to Schedule, F.D. R. Reports," the reporter summarized an announcement by the president. First, he announced the losses for the day, "Naval losses were two destroyers and one landing ship. . . . Air losses were exceedingly light, amounting to about one percent of forces employed." However, it goes on to say that "Mr. Roosevelt was unable to say whether the percentage referred to men, or aircraft, or both." This minor detail could have been left out, but instead seemed to discount the creditability of the president. This was one of the subtleties used to express dislike of F.D.R.

How does all of this coverage affect the reader of the paper? The *Chicago Daily Tribune* is a widely read source throughout Illinois and the United States. Because of this, it is important to know what kind of opinions the paper was giving in order to understand how it affected Illinois. Most of the early coverage was informative and expressed little or no opinions. However, later articles and editorials reflected opinion. The language used was largely pro-war, but at the same time seemed to be opposed to Roosevelt's presidency.

The *Chicago Daily Tribune*'s coverage of D-Day influenced the people of Illinois a great deal. Although early articles were mainly objective, later editorials were strongly opinionated for the war, yet against the president. Because of its high circulation throughout the state, it significantly impacted Illinois history. However, Franklin Delano Roosevelt would go on to win the next election, despite criticism by the *Tribune*. [From *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 6, June 7, June 8, and June 10, 1944.]